

BLACK STUDIES - FALL 2023 COURSES

BLST 0101 - Introduction to Black Studies, Prof. K. Davis, TRF 9:45-10:35

This course considers the issues, epistemologies, and political investments central to Black Studies as a field. We will explore chronologically, thematically, and with an interdisciplinary lens the social forces and ideas that have shaped the individual and collective experiences of African-descended peoples throughout the African Diaspora. This course is a broad survey of the history of chattel slavery, colonial encounters, community life, and social institutions of black Americans. We will address issues of gender and class; the role of social movements in struggles for liberation; and various genres of black expressive cultures. Students will develop critical tools, frameworks, and vocabulary for further study in the field.

HIST/BLST 0105 - The Atlantic World, 1492-1900, Prof. D. Davis, MW 11:15-12:30

Linking the Americas with Europe and Africa, the Atlantic has been a major conduit for the movement of peoples, ideas, technology, foods, and customs. This course will explore four themes from the rise of European imperialism and African Slavery to the dawn of national consciousness and minority rights across the Americas. We will study four major themes: (1) Comparative European Colonization and the First Peoples; 2) Comparative Slavery and the Black Experience (3) Decolonization, National Consciousness, and Ideas of Freedom; and (4) Pseudoscience, Migrations and Creolization. We will draw on primary and secondary sources from the Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, and Hispanophone worlds to give us a broad comparative perspective.

HIST/BLST 0113 - History of Africa To 1800, Prof. Tropp, TR 9:45 - 11:00

This course offers an introductory survey of African history from earliest times to 1800. Through lectures, discussions, readings, and films, we will explore Africa's complex and diverse pre-colonial past. Themes examined in the course include development of long-distance trade networks, the linkages between ecological change and social dynamics, the formation of large pre-colonial states, and the transatlantic slave trade and its impact on social and economic relations within Africa. A broader concern in the course is how we have come to understand the meaning of "Africa" itself and what is at stake in interpreting Africa's pre-colonial history.

ART/BLST 0174 - Spacing, Prof. Schrader, MW 1:30-4:15pm

In this course we will investigate physical structures encountered daily. Buildings, parks, and infrastructure constitute this built environment, reflecting their societies. But what could abolitionist architecture look like, or how might public space in the U.S. create new social relations? Through lenses of race, class, and gender we will build critical vocabularies around the practice of making space. We will focus on the historical and contemporary embodiment of power, race, and culture of the U.S. through the built environment. This studio class will then present a series of projects addressing basic three-dimensional construction and model making techniques. We will engage historical and contemporary artworks, urban planning, architecture, and poetry from perspectives of resistance to dominant modes of constructing space.

BLST 0212 - Race, Racisms, and the Visual: Black American Visual Cultures

Prof. K. Davis, TR 11:15-12:30

In this course we will study visual cultures, performance, and digital media in relation to (anti-)Blackness and Black communities in the United States. We will pay particular attention to gendered and sexualized understandings of race and racisms within visual planes. An interdisciplinary and multimedia approach to the subject matter asks students to develop critical reading and engaged listening skills, as well as foster the ability to deploy critical thought in written, creative, and oral forms. Students should leave the course able to apply core concepts of Black visual studies into their academic work as well as their lives outside of the classroom.

BLST 0304 - African American Activism in Education, Prof. Huang, TR 9:45-11:00

In this course we will examine how Black activists have fought against inequity and contributed to social change in and through education. After discussing fights for access to education – and the use of education for change – in the 19th and early 20th century, we will focus on the Civil Rights and Black Power Era. We will examine struggles for desegregation, integration and community control, initiatives such as the Mississippi Freedom Schools and independent Black Power schools, as well as activism on college campuses. We will conclude by contextualizing current struggles in education within the long fight for Black freedom and equal education.

HIST/BLST 0317 - South Africa in the World, Prof. Tropp, TR 2:15-3:30

Despite the unique trajectory of the rise and fall of apartheid in South Africa, scholars have increasingly moved away from viewing the country's past as exceptional or isolated from broader world historical developments. Taking up this challenge, our course will explore some of the significant global and transnational dimensions of the making of modern South Africa over the past few centuries. Some of the major topics will include: the expansion of different strands of European colonialism and missionary work; Africans' engagement with transnational imperial networks; the wider international influences behind the state's creation and implementation of apartheid; and popular resistance against apartheid and how it intersected with global activist movements.

HIST/BLST 377 - Colonial Commodities & Slavery in the Americas, Prof. Mendoza, MW 2:15-3:30

In this course, we will examine the development of extractive economies and the relationship between colonialism, consumption, and forced labor in colonial north and South America. Using a comparative approach, we will survey how commodities such as cacao, cotton, coffee, gold, silver, sugar, and tobacco shaped African and Native slavery across the continent. Our topics will include the development of price systems for enslaved people and goods in the world economy, the emergence of ideas regarding racial differences and their relationship with forced labor, how enslaved people resisted their enslavement, and the abolition of slavery across the Americas. Students will examine primary sources such as financial records, slave narratives, historical price indexes, and scholarly monographs.

HIST/BLST 0413 - Mapping Migrations in the Modern Era, Prof. D. Davis, MW 2:15-3:30

In this course, we will study the scientific, medical, and technological histories that shaped modern migration and migration policy in the European Atlantic and the Americas. The experiences of African-descendants and other colonized subjects will allow us to understand the 'migration industry complex.' We will analyze pseudoscientific notions about race, gender, and social order under Empire, and their impact on enslaved and indentured labor migrants to/from and across the Americas. We will uncover the epidemiological aspects of migration in places transformed by multinational technological capitalist projects in countries such as Brazil and Panama. We will also study medical practices in migration processing centers and the relationship between migration and mental health using case studies including exiles and climate migrants in the contemporary period.